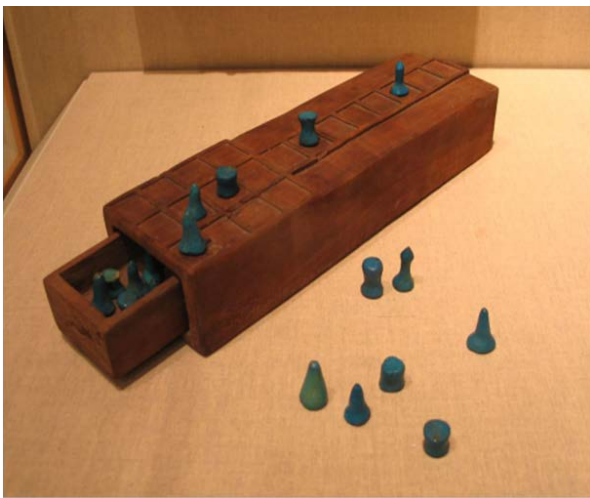


ASEB

Aseb is a board game for two players also called by archaeologists “Game of 20 squares” in reference to a similar game of Middle Eastern origin. In reality, Aseb derives directly from the oldest game in the world, the Sumerian Royal Table of Ur, so much so that in its most archaic forms it featured the same type of flower decoration as the Table of Ur.

Aseb, like the Royal Table of Ur and the Senet, is a game of path, but it is much shorter, faster and simpler.



Arrived in Egypt during the 18th dynasty, it then depopulated especially among Egyptian nobles, so much so that it was later associated with the Senet, depicting the board on the back of the latter game.

Other versions of the Aseb have also been found in Sudan, Crete and even India.

The reconstruction of the game rules was particularly complicated, as the original rules are unknown. To reconstruct them we relied on the studies of Irving Finkel, an Assyrological scholar and philologist currently Assistant Guardian of Writing, Languages and Cultures of Ancient Mesopotamia at the British

Museum’s Department of the Middle East, who translated a cuneiform tablet describing the philosophy, structure of the game and, in a rather convoluted way according to his statements, the rules of the Royal Table of Ur as it was played in later times, that is, both by the Babylonians.

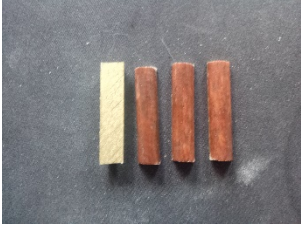

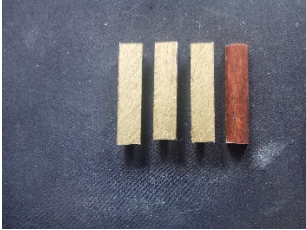
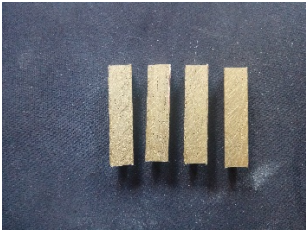

For completeness of studies, we also based on Dmitriy Skiryuk, a Russian reconstructor of ancient games, and Marino Carpignano’s research on his website pergioco.net.

PURPOSE OF THE GAME

Aseb is an easy, fast and fun two player path game. The aim is to make all five pawns available to the player complete the path, trying to prevent the opponent from doing the same.

READ THE EGYPTIAN DICE

The ancient Egyptians had a system of dice that was quite different from the one we know, so we must first of all learn to read them:

Depiction	Value
	1
	2
	3
	4
	0

Note how the last launch (four brown stripes), for the Aseb game takes on a completely different value than the Senet and Mehen.

GAME'S RULES

1. The game begins with all the pieces placed off the board, on the long shots adjacent to the cells of the line.
2. To determine who will go first, both players throw sticks. Whoever rolls the highest score rolls the dice and moves first.
3. Each roll of the dice corresponds to the movement of a single piece, the score cannot be divided by several pieces. The path to follow is the one indicated in figure 1.

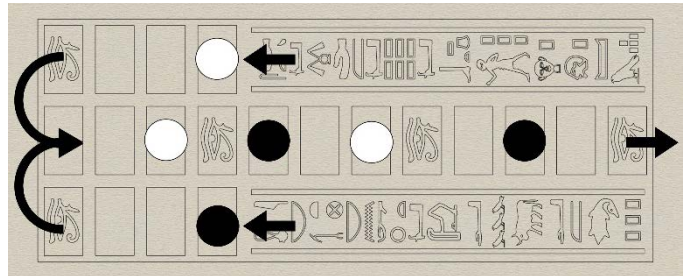


Figure 1

4. No more pieces can stay in the squares at the same time.
5. Once the dice have been rolled, you can decide to move a pawn already in play or put another one out by moving it the number of squares indicated by the dice.
6. Along the way you can skip the pieces, your own or others.
7. If you fall into a square depicting the eye of Ra, you roll the dice and move accordingly. The pawns on the spaces with the eye of Ra along the common path are safe and cannot be eaten. In this case, the opponent will have to move another pawn or - if he has no other alternative - stop in the first free space immediately following.
8. If you fall into a square occupied by an opponent's pawn, you will eat it, making the eaten pawn leave the board and the opponent will have to put it back into play from the beginning of the path.
9. If you end up in a square occupied by another of our pawns and we can't move any more, you skip the turn.
10. To exit the board it is necessary to make an exact score, if it is not possible to move other pawns, the turn is skipped.
11. The player who first takes all his pieces off the board wins the game.

GAME'S VARIATIONS

To the rules translated by Irving Finkel for the game of the Royal Table of Ur, then adapted to his Egyptian successor Aseb, we wanted to indicate some interesting variants formulated by the Russian journalist and writer

We therefore took as a reference point for the reconstruction of the rules the studies of the British Finkel, much more realistic, taking some points of the reconstruction of the Russian Dmitriy Skiryuk, Russian journalist and writer passionate about archeology and board games, as variants.

1. Variation to rule no. 6: Pieces cannot pass their pieces.
2. Variation to rule no. 7: There are no safe squares, except the first four of the course where the opponent's pieces cannot pass.

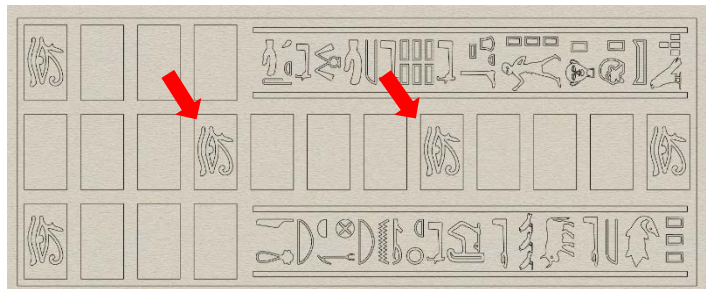
3. Variation to rule no. 9: If a player's piece is in the path of the next piece, the next piece must stop on an empty square preceding the blocking piece, even if the scoring of the dice would have placed it further along the path.
4. Variation to rule no. 14: if the king is blocked along one edge and surrounded on three sides, he can be considered captured. This is also valid when there is at most one Besieged pawn next to the King and this is surrounded together with its sovereign.
5. Variation to rule no. 16: Victory goes to the Besiegers even if the opponent remains with only the King and a pawn.



THE ADVICE OF THE DODO

Don't consider Aseb a game of only luck on dice. It includes a lot of strategy in choosing which moves to make and which pieces to use.

Staying still in one of the two central boxes with the eye of Ra (indicated in the figure near hear), could be a good strategy of pressure towards the opponent, who will be forced to jump and become vulnerable to your next moves.



Considering that the most probable scores that can be obtained by throwing 4 sticks are 2 and 3 (to be precise $6/16$ for the 2 and $2/16$ for the 3), a good game strategy is to try to keep as far away as possible. possible by the opponent's pieces, of at least 4 or 5 squares (whose probability of exit is, for 4, of only $1/16$).